



Shepeau Stow Primary School and
Gedney Hill C.E. Primary School
Federation
Executive Headteacher:
Mrs A Buddle

Shepeau Stow Primary School
Dowsdale Bank, Shepeau Stow
Spalding, Lincs. PE12 0TX
01406 330395



Gedney Hill C.E. Primary School
North Road, Gedney Hill
Spalding, Lincs. PE12 0NL
01406 330258

Dear Parents

19th July 2019

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures and the school responses to poor pupil attendance.

Unbroken attendance at school is vital for learning.

However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unacceptable reasons

The following reasons are not acceptable:

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- parental illness

Illness and first day call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 9.00am or call in in person at the office. It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you so that we are sure of the child's whereabouts; this is a safeguarding measure. Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will usually be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the school nursing team.

Medical/dental appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come to the office first before collecting children. Please bring your child to the office on returning from the appointment. Please indicate in advance whether your child will be returning for the midday meal. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

Emergency occasions

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.

Lateness

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration at 8.55 am each day. Meeting and exchanging news with friends before school is important for the children's social development. Lateness impacts on your child's day as they miss crucial input to support their learning. It is also disruptive to other pupils. Where a genuine reason for lateness exists this will be an authorised absence but where explanations are inadequate or the lateness is after 9.05 a.m. then an absence (late) will be recorded.

Leave of absence:

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported to the Local Authority. Where unauthorised leave is taken, the Governing Body has decided that it will support the imposition of a fixed penalty fine. This can become very expensive.

Approved public performance

Where children are invited to perform in a licensed show or concert (e.g. orchestra, pantomime) you are asked to consult with staff about how much time away from school is required. Where possible such requests will be granted provided that the child's education is unlikely to suffer. The school will also be sympathetic towards leave to participate in a recognized city, county or national sporting event.

Where parents wish to take their child(ren) out of school during term time for purposes other than holidays, they should complete the leave of absence form.

What we are aiming for - Average attendance of around 96% for the year.

What is considered as poor attendance

Anything below 96% is weak

Less than 90% is poor

And if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 85% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE.

In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 96%. We monitor attendance closely. At the end of each half term we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and will be issuing a courtesy letter or make a telephone call informing parents. We then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

Our duty of care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences

We have a duty of care to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and there are invalid reasons for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) then parents render themselves liable to a fine of £60 per pupil per parent. Please see attached a model letter from the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely



Executive Headteacher